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Atari Online News, Etc.
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~ Email Accounts Stolen! ~ People Are Talking! ~ PH PDF Maker beta 3!
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-* Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare *-
-* Facebook Facial Recognition Suit On! *-
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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And then there was one! Love him or hate him, Trump has beaten them all and will likely be the GOP candidate for President. Not in a million years did many think that this day would come, but it has. Washington's Republican insiders must be having a fit, and doing a lot of soul-searching. What happened to all of "likely" hopefuls? And on the Democrats side, the candidate that was considered to be a landslide candidate, is facing an uphill battle against Bernie Sanders! While she seems destined to get the nod, it's not going to be easy. Americans are sick and tired of the same old song and dance from within The Beltway!

Until next time...

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PH PDF Maker beta 3

PH PDF Maker beta 3 is available for download from PHSW site.

New Features in beta 3:

Works with NVDI 3, 4, 5 & SpeedoGDos 5.0c, 5.7. See notes in ZIP file for details. (NVDI 5 is still clipping)
True Colour 24-bits graphics support for real life colour reproduction in PDF.
Selectable output resolution up to 300 dots per inch.
Select from 12 standard PDF paper sizes for your PDF output.
Compressed PDF for smaller file size.
Secured PDF support with password encryption and read/open password.
Protected PDF support by restriction control for copy, printing and editing.

Features from previous version:

Creates PDF file simply by printing from an application via normal GDOS printer settings.
Support VDI output function for graphics text, outline text,

circle, polyline, rectangle and coloured filled area (closed
poly line).
Support Generalized Drawing Primitives (GDP) bar, arc, pieslice,
circle, arc and ellipse.
Support text effects such as bold, italic, outline, underline,
rotation, colour, font scaling, superscript and subscript.
Support VDI colour mapping for supported graphics objects, lines,
texts and filled objects.
Support TrueType fonts for nice font face output.
Support Latin accents as defined by standard Atari character set
(i.e. via keyboard).

https://sites.google.com/site/probehouse/download/phsw-Atari-software-downloads?pageReverted=123#TO1-PH-PDF

Enjoy.

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare Announced!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" 'Uncharted 4' Is Highest Rated PS4 Exclusive!

6 Classic Games Inducted Into Video Game Hall of Fame

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare Announced

Call of Duty is headed to space.

Confirming a week s worth of leaks, Activision has formally revealed the next game in its ridiculously popular first-person shooter franchise: Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare. It s due to launch Nov. 4 for the PC, PS4 and Xbox One.

The new game, developed by Infinity Ward, is indeed reaching past our mess of a planet and taking players into orbit for some zero-gravity action.

It s all very Battlestar Galactica, though the developers are quick to point out that Infinite Warfare is still very much a Call of Duty game.

On one hand, this game is the kind of gritty, boots-on-the-ground,

visceral war story that Call of Duty is known for, said Dave Stohl, studio head of Infinity Ward. On the other, its future setting takes players on a journey of epic scale and proportions, providing incredible gameplay innovations and new experiences for our fans. This is a grand-scale, old-school, all-out war in an epic new-school setting. And it s going to be a hell of a lot of fun.

Two epics and one visceral? Them s fightin words, for sure.

Though Infinite Warfare s specific time period has yet to be revealed, Activision has sketched out basics of the futuristic plot. Ever the greedy species, mankind has depleted Earth s natural resources and colonized the solar system. As the captain of the Retribution warship, players will lead the fight against the insurgent Settlement Defense Front by taking aim with futuristic munitions and high-speed spaceships.

The series has been inching into sci-fi for several years now. Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare sent players to 2054 and outfitted them with rocket-boosted exoskeletons. Last year s Black Ops III pushed the sci-fi flavor even further, pitting man versus machine in a Terminator-like war. Both games enjoyed critical and commercial acclaim and helped right Call of Duty after it stumbled with 2013 s disappointing Call of Duty: Ghosts (incidentally, the last game developed by Infinity Ward).

Activision also confirmed that various special editions of Infinite Warfare will include a fully remastered take on Infinity Ward s magnum opus, the game-changing Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare. The remaster will include 10 multiplayer maps alongside the complete single-player campaign, all uprezzed and fancified.

Infinity Ward will be streaming more info about Infinite Warfare on its Twitch channel starting at 10:30 a.m. (PT) today. We should hear much more about Infinite Warfare at Activision s event during the E3 conference in June.

’Uncharted 4’ Is Now The Highest Rated PS4 Exclusive

Uncharted 4: A Thief s End reviews are live, and things are looking good. Nathan Drake s swan song is earning praise all across the board, boiling the hype surrounding the PS4’s biggest exclusive to a fever pitch. It all puts the game at a 94 on Metacritic, making it the third highest rated PS4 game behind GTA 5 and The Last Of Us: Remastered, and now the highest rated PS4 exclusive to date just edging out Bloodborne s 92 (I suppose technically The Last of Us: Remastered is a PS4 exclusive too, but doesn t quite count, being a remaster). It does not, however, make it the highest rated Uncharted game: that honor goes to Uncharted 2: Among Thieves, my favorite installment to date and always a tough act to follow. Our own Paul Tassi gave it a 9/10, and here s what he had to say:

I was deeply impressed by Uncharted 4, and I absolutely believe it lives up to the high bar of quality the series has set for itself, meaning all the delays were probably worth it. I think

it relies entirely too much on the no-longer-innovative climbing mechanic, but there s simply no denying that this game is a visual masterpiece with likable characters in an interesting and intense story. In short, it s an Uncharted game, and once again, that can speak for itself.

Other critics were equally laudatory, with a smattering of perfect scores and some criticism from some other corners. Here are a few reactions from around the internet.

Gamespot, 10/10: Uncharted 4's gameplay pushes the narrative forward, the narrative feeds off its gameplay, and every detail coalesces to create something bigger. Uncharted 4 bounces between set pieces and personal moments with such grace, with such skill and poise and affection for its characters, that you don t mind when the guns stop firing, and the smoke clears, and Nathan gets a moment to breathe.

Yes, this is a thrilling adventure through exotic locations, with spectacular action sequences and a pacing that pulls you through with ease. I had a smile on my face the second it began. But it s also a story about family. It s a story about self-examination. It s a story about making sacrifices for the ones you care about.

Polygon, 9/10: But it wasn t the promise of bigger, more dangerous explosions that pulled me through Uncharted 4 s campaign, which I completed ravenously over a two-day binge. It was a desire for Nathan Drake to just be done with it all: the killing, the lying, the recklessness, the selfish pursuit of fortune and glory. And that desire wasn t just me projecting my feelings onto a video game character   it s the arc that Drake and Uncharted 4 follow unswervingly.

There is nothing cheap about how Naughty Dog has decided to retire this franchise   no door is left open for a crass surprise sequel   and there s nothing ambiguous about its resolution. Every other Uncharted game has, to varying degrees, posed a question   can a thief be good?   and summarily moved on without wagering a guess. In finding an answer, Uncharted 4 s story soars, and presents a moving, fulfilling finale.
Recommended by Forbes

Destructoid, 9.5/10: That the interpersonal relationships aren t overshadowed by $400 million in pirate gold, or by hundreds of dead mercenaries, is a testament to the caliber of storytelling. Even the ways Uncharted 4 retrofits in previous entries in the series Young Drake s shirt in Uncharted 3 seems to be a hand-me-down from Young Sam in this one   to bring it all to a well-earned, cohesive conclusion is impressive. Stunning art direction; satisfying game feel; a willingness to shake up third-person action conventions, to know when to introduce variety, or let a foot up off the gas; excellent dialogue that reveals a lot without oversharing; and a heck of a conclusion. A thief couldn t ask for a better end.

Game Informer: A Thief End s is the best Uncharted yet, delivering a story I didn t want to end, and an adventure that concludes with a hell of a payoff. The wow factor of the world exploding under Drake s feet has diminished in the years following Uncharted 2, but those moments are still effective, and a true showpiece of the developer s exquisite craftsmanship for world and

gameplay design. All four of Naughty Dog s games culminate in A Thief s End in a fitting and cohesive way that fans should appreciate. I hate seeing Drake go (especially when he s in his prime), but I d rather see him go out on top like he is here than be tasked to find a crystal skull or some other poorly fabricated MacGuffin decades from now.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Six Classic Games Inducted Into Video Game Hall of Fame

A video game that had players zapping space aliens with lasers and another that put them in covered wagons in 1848 have been inducted into the World Video Game Hall of Fame, along with four other games recognized for their influence on gaming and pop culture.

"Space Invaders" and "The Oregon Trail," along with "Grand Theft Auto III," ’’Sonic the Hedgehog," ’’The Legend of Zelda" and "The Sims," make up the class of 2016 honored Thursday at the hall inside The Strong museum in Rochester.

The winners were chosen from among 15 finalists culled from thousands of nominations from around the world. Contenders that missed the final cut were: "John Madden Football," ’’Elite," ’’Final Fantasy," ’’Minecraft," ’’Nurburgring," ’’Pokemon Red and Green," ’’Sid Meier’s Civilization," ’’Street Fighter II" and "Tomb Raider."

The Strong, which also houses the National Toy Hall of Fame, opened the World Video Game Hall of Fame last year to recognize electronic games of all types - arcade, console, computer, handheld and mobile. To get in, games must have had sustained popularity and influenced the video game industry or society.

About this year’s honorees:

"Space Invaders"

The high score display at the top of "Space Invaders" quickly became a standard feature in arcade games. In 1980, the game that had been released in Japan in 1978 broke free from the arcade and entered the home console market to become the Atari 2600’s most popular game.

"The Oregon Trail"

"The Oregon Trail" was developed by three student teachers in 1971 and gave many players their first introduction to computers. It was designed to teach Minnesota schoolchildren American history by making them settlers heading west toward the Pacific

coast. Jon-Paul Dyson, director of The Strong's International Center for the History of Electronic games, said "The Oregon Trail" pioneered the valuable blend of learning and play.

"Grand Theft Auto III"

The first 3-D open-ended game that let players control the action became a model for the "sandbox-style" games that followed. But the flamethrowers and automatic weapons that were part of the action in the 2001 best seller fed worries about the influence of video game violence and reminded that video games are not just for kids, said Jeremy Saucier, the history center's assistant director.

"Sonic the Hedgehog"

"Sonic the Hedgehog" was Sega's answer to Nintendo's Mario character, and was launched in 1991. It remains the best-selling Sega Genesis game of all time and has inspired more than 20 additional games and spin-offs, as well as a television show and comic book, said Strong Associate Curator Shannon Symonds. It also inspired the first video game-themed balloon in Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

"The Legend of Zelda"

"The Legend of Zelda" of 1986 also spun off sequels, comic books and a television series. Inspired by creator Shigeru Miyamoto's childhood expeditions through woods and caves, it popularized non-linear open-world exploration.

"The Sims"

"The Sims" provided a digital dollhouse setting for endless domestic dramas and gave players flexibility to tell stories in an open-ended environment. Its nearly 200 million sales in 60 countries and more than 20 languages following its 2000 release make it the best-selling PC game franchise ever.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Over 272 Million Email Accounts Stolen from Gmail, Microsoft, Yahoo and More

A new report shows that hackers from Russia have obtained login credentials for more than 272.3 million email accounts, which are now available for sale in Russia s criminal underworld, a Most of them are Mail.ru accounts, though the list also includes smaller fractions of Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft email users.

The discovery comes from Hold Security, with Reuters saying it s one of the biggest stashes of credentials to be discovered since the cyber attacks that hit U.S. banks and retailers in 2014.

Alex Holden, founder and chief information security officer at Hold Security, has uncovered some of the largest known data breaches in previous years, including the attacks on JPMorgan, Target, and Adobe Systems.

Researchers found the treasure trove of information by accident, after discovering a young Russian hacker on a forum. He was bragging that he had collected and was going to give away a large number of stolen credentials that amounted to 1.17 billion records.

After eliminating duplicates, Holden said he found 57 million Mail.ru accounts, which is an enormous number compared to the 64 million monthly users the service said it had late last year. The database includes tens of millions of credentials from Gmail (24 million), Microsoft (33 million), and Yahoo (40 million), and hundreds of thousands of accounts from German and Chinese email providers.

Thousands of stolen credentials belong to employees of some of the largest U.S. banks, manufacturing and retail companies, the firm revealed.

This information is potent. It is floating around in the underground, and this person has shown he’s willing to give the data away to people who are nice to him," Holden sais. "These credentials can be abused multiple times.

Because people tend to favor certain passwords and reuse them across online services, this type of stolen information may be very valuable to certain people.

But the unidentified hacker, who obtained the data from various unspecified sources, was looking to sell it for just $1 and made it available to Holden in return of favorable comments.

Hold Security contacted the affected organizations 10 days ago, with Reuters saying that the company s policy is to return data it recovers at little or no cost to the firms that were breached.

What s more disturbing is that it s not clear yet how hackers obtained the data.

Mail.ru Denies Mass Password Breach; Researcher Stands by Findings

Russia’s top Internet company, Mail.ru said on Friday a sliver of its users’ email accounts were vulnerable while denying that tens of millions of other users were at risk after researchers found its data circulating among cyber criminals.

The company said in a statement credentials tied to its email accounts appeared to have been stolen from other, unrelated sites such as social networks or e-commmerce sites which ask users to

sign-up using email addresses like Mail.ru.

"The database is most likely a compilation of a few old data dumps collected by hacking web services where people used their email address to register," the Moscow-based company said.

However, the security expert who uncovered what he said were hundreds of millions of hacked usernames and passwords into some of the world's biggest Web sites, said Mail.ru's own analysis suggested that tens of thousands of users were at risk.

Alex Holden, founder of Hold Security, a U.S. firm that specialises in recovering stolen credentials from hackers, told Reuters on Wednesday his researchers had coaxed a young Russian hacker into disclosing the stolen data.

Reuters reported on Wednesday Hold Security's discovery of 272.3 million stolen credentials globally, including 57 million at Mail.ru and smaller fractions of the email user bases of Google, Yahoo and Microsoft . Mail.ru recently reported 64 million monthly active email users.

In a statement, the Moscow-based company said its own study of sample data provided by Holden had found that 99.982 percent of Mail.ru account credentials on the hit list were invalid. Most had incorrect passwords or used fake email addresses.

But the company acknowledged that 0.018 percent of the usernames and passwords might have worked and said: "We have already notified the affected users to change their passwords."

Thefts of personal information or financial losses can result from hackers breaking into other accounts relying on the same credentials.

Mail.ru said it found that 12.42 percent of the sampling had been marked by its computers as suspicious and blocked.

Holden said he had supplied a randomised sample of data that represents less than one-tenth of the exposed Mail.ru records. He said he was ready to provide Mail.ru the full dataset.

Hackers know users cling to favourite passwords. It's why attackers reuse old passwords found on one account to try to break into other accounts of the same user.

Mail.ru said its experts constantly monitor the web for data dumps to see if Mail.ru account credentials are compromised. It said the "sole purpose" of revealing the possible credential theft was to create media hype and to promote Holden's business.

Holden, whose firm earns commissions from providing threat intelligence to some of world's biggest companies, said he had spent the past week informing any company whose credentials appeared to have been stolen and was doing it for free.

"We have no claim to this information because we just retrieved it from the hacker and are sharing it with the community," he said. Hold Security refuses to publish the database of stolen accounts but said it provides specific data to authorised

technical staff at the affected firms.

Lawsuit Challenging Facebook s Facial Recognition System Moves Forward

A lawsuit alleging that Facebook photo tagging violates user privacy has cleared a crucial early hurdle. A judge in Northern California District Court today ruled against a motion by Facebook to dismiss. That leaves the larger questions around biometric privacy unanswered, but clears the way for a major legal battle over one of Facebook’s most popular products.

The lawsuit alleges that Facebook’s photo-tagging system violated user privacy by creating faceprints geometric representations of a person’s face without explicit consent. Those faceprints are typically used to identify users to suggest tags for uploaded photos. According to the complaint, that’s a violation of Illinois’s Biometric Information Privacy Act, which forbids the collection of biometric identifiers like fingerprints or faceprints without a person’s explicit consent. As Alvaro Bedoya of the Center on Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law described it, "If you run a bar, the law doesn t prevent you from picking up my used pint glass, but it prevents you from pulling my DNA off it."

The photo-tagging system is disclosed in the company’s Data Policy and users can opt out of it, but it is unclear whether those measures will satisfy the legal definition of consent. "This lawsuit is without merit," a Facebook spokesperson said in an earlier statement on the case, "and we will defend ourselves vigorously."

Today’s decision focused on the question of whether the Illinois law is applicable to Facebook, one of the major legal hurdles facing the plaintiffs. Facebook’s Terms of Service maintains that the the company is only bound by California and federal laws, and the company had moved to dismiss the case on those grounds. But today, the judge ruled that the terms-of-service clause isn’t sufficient to nullify the Illinois law. As a result, the plaintiffs have a valid claim under the Illinois biometrics law and the case can proceed.

If the plaintiffs win, it could have major implications for both Facebook and the industry at large. Facebook’s photo-tagging system is one of its core products, and one that has already been copied by competitors like Twitter and Google Photos. Those systems are already beginning to see similar challenges. In March, Google was hit with a similar lawsuit alleging that the photo-tagging system in Google Photos violates the same Illinois law.

Mystery Solved? Australian Says He’s Bitcoin Founder

An Australian man long rumored to be associated with the digital currency Bitcoin has publicly identified himself as its creator,

a claim that would end one of the biggest mysteries in the tech world.

BBC News said Monday that Craig Wright told the media outlet he is the man previously known by the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. The computer scientist, inventor and academic said he launched the currency in 2009 with the help of others.

Wright made similar claims to the Economist magazine, which said on its website it still has nagging questions about Wright s claim. He also asserted his role in a lengthy blog post.

The founder s identity has been shrouded in uncertainty, and the media s inability to pinpoint the person responsible has led to a series of investigations. Last year, some reports claimed Wright was the founder and had used a false name to mask his identity.

Wright told the BBC he had decided to make his identity known to stop the spread of misinformation about Bitcoin.

 I didn t take the decision lightly to make my identity public and I want to be clear that I m doing this because I care so passionately about my work and also to dispel any negative myths and fears, he said.

Wright said he believes that Bitcoin and blockchain, the technical innovation that makes the currency possible, can change the world for the better.

He added that he would now be able to release his research and academic work to help people understand the potential of Bitcoin.

Bitcoin is designed for secure financial transactions that require no central authority   no banks, no government regulators. That makes it attractive to off-the-grid types such as libertarians, people who want to evade tax authorities, and criminals, even though Bitcoin doesn t guarantee anonymity, since it documents every transaction in a public forum.

According to the BBC, Wright supported his claim to being the founder by signing digital messages using cryptographic keys used during the early days of Bitcoin.

If Wright is the founder, he is likely a very wealthy person. The person going by the pseudonym Nakamoto is believed to have amassed about 1 million Bitcoins, which would be worth about $450 million if converted to cash, the BBC says.

Jon Matonis, one of the founding directors of the Bitcoin Foundation, which says it helps support the use of the currency, told the BBC he is convinced that Wright is who he claims to be and is responsible for a brilliant achievement.

The hunt for Bitcoin s founder had become a mission for some journalists. Attention focused for a time on a Finnish sociologist, a Japanese math whiz and a Japanese-American engineer.

In December, the technology magazine Wired and the website Gizmodo

both published lengthy investigations based on documents and emails that concluded Wright was probably the man behind the pseudonym. He was living in an upscale suburb of Sydney at the time.

The reports were circumstantial and contained no proof. But Wright s new statements, and his use of Nakamoto s own encrypted signature, known as a PGP key, may have confirmed his role.

He also spoke to GQ magazine and the London Review of Books.

Rethinking Security for the Internet of Things

Many people scoffed in January 2014 when Cisco CEO John Chambers pegged the Internet of Everything as a potential $17 trillion market, five to 10 times more impactful on society than the Internet itself. Two years later, it seems that Chambers prediction for the phenomenon more commonly known as the Internet of Things (IoT) could be on the conservative side.

There s no question that IoT is ushering in a new era of innovation, connecting the digital and machine worlds to bring greater speed and efficiency to diverse sectors, including automotive, aviation, energy and healthcare. But with sensitive data increasingly accessible online   and more endpoints open to attackers   businesses are quickly realizing that security cannot be an afterthought.

The bad news is that they re relying on the same solutions that have failed in the past   and which continue to fail. Created four decades ago to secure communications between two human parties, Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) was never designed to handle the complexity of managing 50 billion devices on industrial-scale networks.

McKinsey estimates that the cost of ineffective cybersecurity will rise to $3 trillion by 2020. Given that the number of connected devices is predicted to reach 20.8 billion by 2020, there s an urgent need to fundamentally rethink security for an always connected, high-volume, decentralized world of machines. Data has an entire lifetime

Bruce Schneier observed that throughout the 1990s, everyone was focused on data in motion   communication between two parties when they should have focused on data at rest. Emphasis on the former is a major reason modern security continues to fail. We need to consider data throughout its entire lifetime, not just secure transmission between devices, which becomes meaningless if the device itself is compromised.

> Again and again, we ve tried to retrofit security in after the fact.
>
> Bruce Schneier

In the machine world, data begins and finishes as data at rest. In between, it passes through myriad interacting devices,

customer transactions, user activities, access, authentication, software deliveries, API interactions the list goes on. By focusing only on communication, there s no chain of custody or way to audit the lifetime of data hosted in different environments administered by different organizations. One compromise anywhere in the chain, and the reliability of the collected data and any conclusions derived from it will be suspect.

PKI was designed for Alice and Bob to encrypt and share secret messages, not for massive-scale transmission among millions of machines. Communication is stateless; if Alice thinks her key has been compromised, she can simply generate a new key pair and register the new public key. Previous communications (those before the key compromise) will not be impacted.

Machines are stateful; the keys used to verify the integrity of their components have to be secured and managed throughout the life of the machines and the data they produce.

The underlying assumption today is that machines and the sensor data they manage can be secured. But what exactly are we securing? Information security has three components:

> Confidentiality: access to sensitive information is restricted and protected
> Integrity: assurance that the information is as it should be, absent of compromise
> Availability: those authorized to access this information are able to do so

The overwhelming majority of modern security solutions encryption, firewalls, two-factor authentication, tokens target data confidentiality, erecting barriers against unauthorized access. But machines, their communications protocols, software, rules and exposed APIs will always have vulnerabilities.

What happens when these weak points are breached and confidentiality has been compromised? In most cases, like Sony or Anthem, the breach isn t even detected until months later, after which system administrators must identify which pieces of data were accessed and/or manipulated an economically and socially costly task.

Unfortunately, I don t think there s a security expert in the world who thinks we can build IoT networks without vulnerabilities. So we need a new approach. When breaches are detected, we need to know what data has been changed, and how.

This is an integrity issue and it should be the key focus of modern security in the age of connected everything. Focusing on integrity will require a different approach, and a new set of tools. Data integrity schemes based on blockchain, Merkle hash trees, scalable provable data possession (SPDP) and dynamic provable data possession (DPDP) are good places for the industry to focus its efforts.

We can work on scaling these technologies, making them reliable for large networks. This is a necessary complement to endpoint security, especially for the IoT industry. As Schneier points out in relation to integrity attacks, Again and again, we ve tried to

retrofit security in after the fact. And, he warns, once the attacks start doing real damage once someone dies from a hacked car or medical device, or an entire city s 911 services go down for a day there will be a real outcry to do something.

The reality is that basing the integrity of networks and systems on the security of key-stores and the administrators who manage them is a failing strategy. Rather, truly effective solutions must continuously monitor the state of a network s entry points and the data within. For all the energy and resources spent guarding against breaches, let s devote equal attention to protocols for when not if they occur.

Microsoft: Windows 10 Hits 300 Million Milestone

Windows 10 is running on 300 million active devices as of May 5, according to Microsoft. That's up from 200 million devices four months ago and 270 million since the end of March.

Microsoft's goal is to have Windows 10 running on one billion devices by 2018.

"Active devices" mean devices than have been active in the past 28 days, Microsoft officials have said. The figure includes not only Windows 10 installed on PCs, tablets and phones, but also on Xbox One consoles and HoloLens, Surface Hubs.

Today's blog post announcing the latest milestone also includes a reminder to users that Microsoft's first-year-free upgrade offer for Windows 10 ends on July 29, 2016. Just a reminder: The first-year-free upgrade deal means those running Windows 7, 8.X and Windows Phone 8.1 can upgrade to Windows 10 for free. It doesn't mean those who upgraded for free start having to pay for Windows 10 after July 29.

Today's blog post seems to imply that Microsoft has decided definitively against extending its first-year free offer. It says:

"After July 29th, you'll be able to continue to get Windows 10 on a new device, or purchase a full version of Windows 10 Home for $119." (The $119 price is the current retail price of a copy of Windows 10 Home.)

However, this reminder doesn't necessarily mean Microsoft has decided against renewing that deal, a company spokesperson said when I asked.

The full official statement to my question as to whether Microsoft plans to extend the free upgrade deal (which doesn't really answer it):

> "The free upgrade offer has been a big success, leading to the fastest adoption of Windows ever, with Windows 10 on more than 300 million active Windows devices. The free upgrade promotion is currently slated to end on July 29 and we encourage all of our customers to take advantage of it while it is still active."

Windows 10 is a key part of Microsoft’s plan to be more of an Internet of things player. The catch is that few people see Microsoft putting the pieces together.

(Note the words "currently slated." That’s the iffy part.)

There’s been speculation, both pro and con, as to whether Microsoft will end up extending its free upgrade offer beyond the current July deadline.

Microsoft might end up making its Windows 10 Anniversary Update (a k a Redstone 1), due around July 29, free for the first year as a way of extending the offer, as some have suggested. Or it could opt for a low-price, but not totally free upgrade offer to take its place - if officials decide that keeping some kind of upgrade offer in place makes sense.

How To Upgrade to Windows 10 for Free (While You Still Can)

If you’re still on the fence about whether to upgrade to Windows 10, the clock is ticking.

Microsoft’s free Windows 10 upgrade offer officially expires on July 29, 2016. After July 29, upgrading will cost you $119, £100 or AU$180. So if you’re running Windows 7, Windows 8 or Windows 8.1 on a laptop, desktop or tablet computer, the time to act is now.

Before you upgrade

Your device must meet the minimum physical requirements for Windows 10. You will need at least: 1GHz CPU, 1GB (32-bit) or 2GB of RAM (64-bit), 16GB (32-bit) or 20GB of open hard drive space (64-bit) and a DirectX 9-capable video card with WDDM driver.

You must be running Windows 7, Windows 8 or Windows 8.1. You can check your current operating system on Microsoft’s website.

You must be running the latest version of your operating system. To update Windows 7, go to Start > Control Panel > System and Security > Windows Update. To update Windows 8 or Windows 8.1, go to Start > PC Settings > Update and recovery > Windows Update.

You should probably back up your computer. Here’s how to prepare your PC for Windows 10.

How to upgrade right now

1. Go to the Windows 10 download page. At the top of the page, you’ll see a button that says Upgrade now. Click this button to download the Windows 10 download client.

2. Double-click the Windows 10 download client to run it. A User Account Control (UAC) window will pop up asking if you want to allow this program to make changes to your computer; click OK to proceed.

3. The client will download Windows 10 and walk you through the setup process. The process could take up to an hour and your

device will restart several times while you’re setting up Windows 10.

If you upgrade and realize you absolutely hate Windows 10, no sweat - you have 30 days to go back to your previous version of Windows.

Microsoft Says It Will Stop Pestering Users To ’Get Windows 10’ in July

There was one issue that went unspoken in Microsoft s announcement on Thursday that the free Windows 10 upgrade offer would end on July 29. What would the company do about all those annoying, almost malware-like, pop-up notifications to upgrade to Windows 10 that appeared on the PCs of Windows 7 and 8.1 users? The answer is they will disappear.

Details are still being finalized, but on July 29th the Get Windows 10 app...will be disabled and eventually removed from PCs worldwide, Microsoft told WinBeta in a written statement.

The company warned that it may take some time to disable the upgrade pop-ups on computers worldwide.

Many people disliked the company s approach, but it appears Microsoft s upgrade push has been relatively successful. Microsoft said on Thursday there were now 300 million active Windows 10 devices worldwide a bump of 30 million from late April when Microsoft said there were 270 million active users.

Anyone currently on Windows 7 or 8.1 that doesn t plan on upgrading to Windows 10 can already disable the Windows 10 prompts. The easiest way is to use GWX Control Panel, a utility that automates the process for you.

The impact on you: As with all things Windows 10, conspiracy theories abound. The big question is just how serious Microsoft is about ending the upgrade strategy on July 29? If the company backtracks and decides to extend the free upgrade offer or keep it going in perpetuity as some critics have argued they should then the upgrade pop-ups may remain.

Chrome Finally Topples Internet Explorer in the Battle of The Browser

Google has taken the crown from Microsoft in the battle of the browsers.

Findings reveals that for the month of April, Google Chrome held 41.6 percent share of all desktop browser traffic picked up by web tracker NetMarketShare.

This victory is a 2.6 percent jump from March and a .3 percent lead over Microsoft’s Internet Explorer, which has dropped from 43.4 percent to 41.3 percent over the past two months.

In April, Google Chrome held 41.6 percent share of all desktop browser traffic picked up by web tracker NetMarketShare, a 2.6 percent jump from March and a .3 percent lead over Microsoft s Internet Explorer, which has dropped from 43.4 percent to 41.3 percent over the past two months.

In April, Google Chrome held 41.6 percent share of all desktop browser traffic picked up by web tracker NetMarketShare, a 2.6 percent jump from March and a .3 percent lead over Microsoft’s Internet Explorer, which has dropped from 43.4 percent to 41.3 percent over the past two months

HOW MUCH TRAFFIC DOES EACH BROWSER HOLD?

Chrome: 41.6%

Internet Explorer: 41.3%

FireFox: 9.76%

Safari: 4.91%

Opera:1.89%

Konqueror: 0.01%

NetMarketShare reviews unique visits and weighs its data against all other internet traffic around the world.

Although other statistics claim Google overtook its arch rival months ago, it is the first time the NetMarketShare results have favoured Google.

Although the two search giants are going head-to-head for the top spot, the two left the rest of the contenders in the dust.

Firefox trailed behind at a mere 9.76 percent, followed by Safari with 4.91 percent, Opera and Konqueror didn’t even hit two percent combined.

All of the lagging browsers, except for Firefox, seem to have maintained a constant amount of traffic since June 2015 even if they are smaller numbers.

But Internet Explorer has been slowly plunging.

During June 2015, Microsoft owned half of the desktop browser market, but has not been able to climb back up since.

Some 17 years ago, the browsers could only render basic HTML when it was first released, but was still impressed users with its 20 basic tags.

Microsoft reached an all-time high of 96 percent in 1996, just two years after AltaVista and Yahoo hit the market.

Internet Explorer was dubbed the most popular internet browser in late 1998 and early 1999, and has survived the stampede of other browsers into the World Wide Web.

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What some may find interesting is that Internet Explorer comes bundled on all Window desktops and users have to download Chrome in order to use it, which is what some say played a role in the higher market share but doesn't explain the current decline.

Chrome has been gaining traction since Internet Explorer started taking a dive.

Siri 2.0: Google And Facebook Offered To Buy Advanced Digital Assistant Viv

The creators of Siri are about to show off its successor, Viv, which they say is smarter and more capable.

The creators of Siri have been hard at work on its successor and now, after four years of development, Viv is ready for its first public demonstration. But the AI-powered digital assistant has already been catching the eye of Google and Facebook.

On Monday, the team behind Viv, which includes Dag Kittlaus and Adam Cheyer, who were the co-creators of Siri, will give the first public demonstration of the technology they dub the global brain. Viv is a smarter version of Siri, according to its creators, and will allow users to carry out a huge range of actions by just using their voice and without having to tap on a screen or type a request.

The work on Viv began in 2003 and was what its creators envisioned Siri would be. According to a demonstration seen by the Washington Post, Viv was able to get pizzas delivered to Viv s engineers without the need to have any specific app installed and without the need for instructions to be typed, all by asking: Get me a pizza from Pizz a Chicago near my office.

This was how Kittlaus described the technology to the Guardian in January: Tell Viv what you want and it will orchestrate this massive network of services that will take care of it, adding that Viv s capabilities can be integrated into everything from smartphones and laptops to smart home devices like fridges, light bulbs and security cameras. According to the company s website, Viv is a global platform that enables developers to plug into and create an intelligent, conversational interface to anything.

Along with Kittlaus and Cheyer, around a third of the team that created Siri is now working on Viv after many left Apple due to disagreements over the way Siri was being developed.

While the company says it will work with developers to let them add Viv s capabilities to their apps, that could all change if the company is acquired by a bigger player, and according to sources speaking to the Washington Post this week, both Google and

Facebook have tabled offers to acquire Viv.

While Apple has Siri and Microsoft has Cortana, Google doesn t really have a similar product for its Android and Chrome users. While Google Now does a lot of what Siri and Cortana offer, it is not as interactive and therefore Viv would seem like a good fit.

Facebook, whose CEO is an investor in Viv, is taking a different path, leveraging its investment in artificial intelligence into chatbots, which it plans to integrate into its Messenger app to help companies automate interactions with their customers.

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